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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of States parties

Ethiopia*

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–4	3
II.	Situation of women in today's Ethiopia	5–13	3
	A. Way forward to equitable women's development	8–10	5
	B. Process of change towards eliminating discrimination against women and ensuring their sustainable development	11–13	5
III.	Initiatives taken by governmental and non-governmental organizations and by women themselves to give effect to CEDAW during the reporting period	14–61	6
	A. Eliminating economic discrimination against women	15–17	6
	B. Eliminating systemic and sociocultural discrimination in education	18–22	7
	C. Eliminating legal discrimination	23–30	8
	D. Eliminating violence against women and girls	31–34	9
	E. Eliminating discrimination in the health sector and service delivery system	35–36	10
	F. Eliminating discrimination in labour and social welfare	37–40	11
	G. Eliminating discrimination in agriculture	41–47	11

* For the combined initial, second and third periodic reports submitted by the Government of Ethiopia see CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3 and Add.1, considered by the Committee at its fifteenth session.

02-67304 (E) 130203

	H.	HIV/AIDS	48–51	12
	I.	Eliminating discrimination in water resources	52	13
	J.	Advocacy campaign and capacity-building to eliminate discrimination	53–55	14
	K.	Policy and strategic measures to eliminate discrimination	56–57	14
	L.	Partnership of governmental and non-governmental organizations to eliminate discrimination	58–61	16
IV.	Actual achievement and progress made		62–82	16
	A.	Education	63–66	17
	B.	Violence against women, harmful traditional practices and women's health concerns	67	17
	C.	Economic ability and independence of women	68	18
	D.	Social and economic rehabilitation of women and children	69	18
	E.	Labour and social welfare	70–71	19
	F.	Women in the federal civil service	72	19
	G.	Agriculture	73	19
	H.	Legal equality	74–78	20
	I.	HIV/AIDS	79–80	20
	J.	Skill development	81	21
	K.	Social mobilization, lobbying and advocacy	82	21
V.	Structural changes (social and organizational)		83–87	21
	A.	Focus on CEDAW articles	84	21
	B.	Specific benefits for women	85–87	22
VI.	Forthcoming events and initiatives		88	24
VII.	Conclusion		89–90	25

I. Introduction

1. Ethiopia, as a State party, has always been respectful of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Attempts have been made by the Government of Ethiopia to ensure full and effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention as well as the other international human rights treaties. Given the diverse nature of the society, its culture and heritage and the political ups and downs, the Government has been conscious of the limitations that it operates within. These should not, however, be permanent stumbling blocks on the way to full implementation of the Convention.

2. This is the fourth time that Ethiopia has reported to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the committee established under the Convention. The present report follows a national report submitted to the Committee at its seventh session in September 1997. This is, however, a combined report of the fourth and fifth reporting periods to be submitted to the Committee.

3. Given the commitment of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the cause of women, the national machinery on women's advancement focused on the implementation of the National Policy on Women. The policy represents the national view and its strategies with regard to promoting and establishing women's equality and their human rights at all levels. The provisions of the Convention provide a strong impetus to implement the Government's commitments to the women of the country.

4. Section II of the report gives a brief summary of the general situation of women and girls in today's Ethiopia. Section III provides an overview of the major initiatives taken during the reporting period to give effect to the Convention. Section IV deals with the qualitative changes brought into the lives of women as a result of the new initiatives taken during the period. Section V presents the acute changes that took place in the social structure, the articles that have had the most impact on the change process and the specific benefits women received. In section VI, the report briefly highlights forthcoming initiatives.

II. Situation of women in today's Ethiopia

5. Despite the existence of policy instruments and legislative and institutional commitment to women's causes, in actuality, a vast majority of Ethiopian women, particularly in rural areas, are far from being well-off, independent and direct beneficiaries of development initiatives at the national level. Their status in the sociopolitical, economic and cultural context is far behind the expected level. Even today, the extent of their problems and disadvantages remains critical. The main reasons for persistently experiencing such a situation, inter alia, are the sociocultural portrait of women and girls and their assigned role; existing practices of resource distribution; the division of labour; and the distribution of opportunities. Moreover, there is a huge gap between the needs and concerns of women and girls and the actual effort being made in response to them. It is in most cases related to actual implementation or lack of implementation of the policy, laws and constitutionally given rights of women and to national poverty. The combination of all these factors results in a desperate situation. The existing societal practices, which favour men's interests mainly, have a negative impact on initiatives and efforts towards women's

emancipation. Because of the sociocultural constructions and practices, women are considered to be subordinate to men and second-class members/citizens both in the family and in the society. This is greatly influenced by the existing societal institutions, whether cultural, educational or media-related. In other words, the societal institutions have validated such practices, which, in the view of women, amounts to sheer discrimination against them. Therefore, a two-prong and systemic approach is required to eradicate such deep-rooted problems.

6. The national women's machinery, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and international development partners (bilateral and multilateral), is engaged in activities promoting women's rights, advocating for proper implementation of policy objectives and CEDAW to eliminate discrepancies and discrimination against women in the society. Though the systemic effort that has been put in place since 1990 has to some extent paid off, much remains to be achieved to claim a discrimination-free society for women in Ethiopia. Despite the efforts of the machinery and the commitment of the Government, despite the existence of women's policy and constitutional provisions, even today Ethiopian women are faced with some major disadvantages, which have a negative impact on their progress and advancement both in private and public spheres. The following crucial disadvantages must be overcome for women to achieve full equality with men and thus give full effect to the provisions of CEDAW and the National Policy on Ethiopian Women: (i) lack of access to socially and economically valued resources and minimum or no control over them; (ii) disproportionately higher responsibility in the household and unrecognized contributions in social affairs; (iii) lack of opportunities for education owing to the family economic distribution system and limited or no access to information; and (iv) underrepresentation and misrepresentation in decision-making and policy planning bodies at all levels. Apart from this, the persistent economic poverty in the country has a direct impact on the situation and its persistence. This gives rise to too many critical concerns affecting women's everyday life both from a "social relation" and "personhood" point of view, reflected in different forms of deprivation and maltreatment such as widespread violence against women and girls, denial of human and legal rights, harmful traditional practices and no/less access to such means of exploring human potential as education, basic health-care facilities, access to employment, training and credit. All these factors contribute to and perpetuate the existing disparity and discrimination against women and girls and their subordinate status. This state of affairs in effect denies their constitutional rights and entitlements, resulting in slow progress towards full implementation of the provisions of CEDAW.

7. To challenge such a situation and to create inroads for gradually establishing women's equality with men, the national machinery envisages giving full effect to the provisions of the National Policy on Women, CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the National Policy to Stop Harmful Practices against Women, hence making an effort to bring an end to all forms of discrimination and violence against women and the girl child. The national machinery strives to ensure that women and children are not victims of systemic oppression, discrimination and unequal distribution/division of social, economic and household power, resources, positions and responsibilities and opportunities.

A. Way forward to equitable women's development

8. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the Ethiopian Government and the Women's Affairs Office (WAO) in the Office of the Prime Minister have committed themselves to systemic efforts for the implementation of the Platform for Action and other women's rights treaties and conventions, including CEDAW. The National Policy on Ethiopian Women, being the guiding principle, provides directives to all concerned in order to translate instruments of women's equal rights into reality.

9. In accordance with the commitment it made, WAO developed a National Plan of Action with clearly defined strategic objectives and key actors for each area of concern. The exercise required making a thorough analysis of the problems, concerns and needs of women vis-à-vis required resources, institutional arrangements, capability of the existing institutions and time frame. The process resulted in the prioritization of critical areas of concern and the six most crucial areas have been selected for implementation with high priority. Poverty eradication, education, violence against women and girls, the girl child and institutional mechanisms are included in the priority areas. In recent years, implementation of national initiatives has always been focused on the ability to achieve desired change in the selected areas. This focus has contributed to higher literacy rates among females, increased girls' enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education, increased economic opportunities of women and policy and legislative changes in favour of women's interests — a step forward to achieving the long-term goals of WAO. This progress is the outcome of a joint effort of the national machinery on women, which encompasses WAO as the coordinating agency, Women's Affairs Departments in the sectoral ministries, Regional Women's Affairs Bureaux, the Parliamentary Women's Caucus and Women's Movement, civic organizations, NGOs and women's associations and groups.

10. Women's groups and movements, NGOs and the Parliamentary Women's Caucus played a vital role in terms of providing women's issues with perspective and lobbying at a high level to achieve the expected result. This has been possible mainly because of the prevailing political environment, whereby civil society, citizen's groups and women's movements emerged and function hand in hand with the Women's Affairs Offices in the government machinery to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to establish women's equality with men.

B. Process of change towards eliminating discrimination against women and ensuring their sustainable development

11. The Government of Ethiopia and WAO comprehend gender inequality and gender discrimination as sociopolitical issues. Hence, intervention of a sociopolitical nature is imperative. This includes operational movement both at the grass-roots and national levels and policy measures at the regional and federal levels to bring both long-term and immediate effect.

12. An overview of the recent initiatives and policy measures may provide a clear indication of the achievements and success in bringing changes in the lives and status of women and girls in Ethiopia. In broad terms, a series of concrete steps have been taken to effect changes in women's sociopolitical and economic life and status.

13. Some recent statistics provide a clear picture of the progress that has gradually been taking place in the life of women in Ethiopia. According to the Human Development Report 2001, women's life expectancy at birth is 44.9 years, the current adult literacy rate is 31.8 per cent and estimated annual per capita earned income is US$ 414. At present, women occupy 7.8 per cent of the seats in Parliament. There has been a trend towards women's increased participation in the political spheres both at the federal and regional levels — an indication of systemic and political environmental change in the country. Despite the achievements and progress in recent years, it is recognized that the State machinery and non-governmental actors, including civil society and women's groups, organizations and associations, will have to go a long way to ensure the complete elimination of discrimination against women. An account of recent initiatives is provided in section III, describing the kind of changes that have been brought to the lives and status of women over the reporting period.

III. Initiatives taken by governmental and non-governmental organizations and by women themselves to give effect to CEDAW during the reporting period

14. Since September 1997, the women of Ethiopia have witnessed changes of a different nature, some of which are directly linked to their legal rights and entitlement to challenge and change the discriminatory provisions against them. There have been legislative changes, changes of an administrative nature and changes in policy decisions. Measures have been taken at the federal and regional levels. The cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental agencies in implementing the provisions of CEDAW has improved. The following paragraphs provide a concrete analysis of the initiatives taken during the reporting period in terms of eliminating discrimination against women.

A. Eliminating economic discrimination against women

15. The Women's Development Initiative Project (WDIP) and the Ethiopian Women's Development Fund (EWDF) are two major initiatives to address Ethiopian women's economic poverty, vulnerability and dependency. WDIP is a project that deals primarily with women's economic independence at the grass-roots level. Its main objective is to address the gender dimension of poverty and to provide women with sustainable economic ability and marketable skills. Nonetheless, built-in political elements of the project are expected to strengthen the women's collective movement at the grass-roots level and therefore enhance their negotiation ability and linkages to different socio-economic and political institutions. Moreover, the project aims at strengthening the capacity of the institutions and individuals employed in the task of mainstreaming gender. In effect, it cultivates the seeds of long-term and sustainable development of women and their emancipation in Ethiopia.

16. EWDF was established to assist women's endeavours in favour of their interests. The Fund is envisaged to cater for women's self-development by carrying out research on their lives, needs and concerns and to bring meaningful and lasting changes in their lives and status. The establishment of the Fund is a joint effort of both the governmental women's machinery and the women's groups in the country.

The emergence of women's groups with the objective of social movement strengthens the belief of WAO that women's rights and their empowerment could be achieved only through social movement, whereby EWDF has the potential to provide continued support to strengthen it.

17. Apart from WDIP and EWDF, there are other initiatives and endeavours being implemented by the governmental and non-governmental agencies, including projects being carried out to improve women's access to critical economic resources such as credit, training, skills and information.

B. Eliminating systemic and sociocultural discrimination in education

18. Education, being one of the priority areas of the Government of Ethiopia for effecting change, has received special emphasis to ensure policy reform and substantial changes towards affecting women's lives for their advancement. Concrete measures that proved to be effective have been of two categories.

19. *Affirmative action for girls and women's education and literacy.* Affirmative action has been taken to increase enrolment of female students in the educational institutions at different levels. Thirty per cent of the total number of seats has been reserved for female students in higher educational institutions (university). The introduction of the Girls' Scholarship Programme is a major step forward in the advancement of Ethiopian women. Though this is a recent initiative taken by the Women's Affairs Department in the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Forum for African Women's Education, it has already demonstrated its effectiveness to promote girls' education and to encourage girls to remain in school. The built-in rewards of the programme encourage not only the adolescent girls of grades nine and ten (and above) to continue their education but also their parents and the community to send their daughters to school. The programme acts upon the long-standing problems of dropping out and repeating of girls in grade nine and above and helps to create an environment that ensures the continuity of education of disadvantaged girls.

20. So far the programme has covered 28 schools in seven regions of the country. Considering its strong influence on the increase of girls' education not only at the high school level but also at the university level, it is hoped that the programme will be replicated in other schools in areas where girls' participation is very low.

21. The promotion of girls' education by rewarding individuals and institutions for their noble contribution is another recent initiative in the country. This aims to encourage a wider section of the population, including media and press people, to take an active part in the promotion of girls' education. In addition, special drives are being launched by governmental, non-governmental and multilateral organizations and agencies to increase girls' enrolment and encourage them to remain in school.

22. *Enabling policy environment.* Apart from affirmative actions, appropriate policy instruments and strategic measures have been initiated by the Ministry of Education to sustain change as well as to effect greater change so as to eliminate systemic discrimination and provide less fortunate girls with the necessary assistance to ensure their education. One of the major conceptual shifts in this

regard is the action to bring change in the substance of educational material. The specific actions that are being taken to influence policy are the following:

- Development of the girls' education policy
- Development of a policy-implementing strategy
- Incorporating the concept of gender mainstreaming in, inter alia, the curriculum, educational mass media and teachers' training programmes
- Development of gender-sensitive guidelines for, inter alia, curriculum development and parents' counselling
- Capacity-building of head teachers in high schools and gender focal points in the regions to deal with gender matters
- Conducting research in the area in order to devise mechanisms for increased girls' participation in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

C. Eliminating legal discrimination

23. In recent years, a significant change has been noticed in the legal framework of the country to ensure protection of women's rights. From the Family Code to the Penal Code, from succession law to citizenship rights, a massive revision has been carried out to make the legal system and instruments women-friendly. The specific changes that have been brought about are the following.

24. *Legal instruments: revision of the Family Code.* Discriminatory laws have been revised and made equitable. The new laws, which treat women and men, husbands and wives equally and provide them with equal choices, have been enforced.

25. During 2000-2001, the government machinery on women, in collaboration with the non-governmental agencies, have been examining the discriminatory aspect of the existing Family Code. Based on their findings, they proposed measures to remove the discrimination and inequality and establish women's legal equality with men in the Family Code. The Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association undertook studies on the violation of women's rights in different regions of the country. Their findings provided input in organizing arguments in favour of women. WAO lobbied the lawmakers and different agencies to ensure revision of the discriminatory laws. The unrelenting effort of the collaborative forces resulted in the new and revised Family Code based on the principle of gender equality. The new Family Code came into effect in early 2001 at the federal level.

26. *Penal Code under revision.* Revision of the Penal Code has been under way with the objective of bringing an end to the discriminatory provisions in the instrument. In the process of revision, the issue of violence against women has been considered from the point of view of women's rights and dignity. The draft has been presented for public discussion and the finalization process is under way. The draft suggests the new forms and degree of penalty for the perpetrators.

27. Revision of the law of succession under the Civil Code is under way. Under the proposed laws, women and men will be treated equally in accordance with the constitutional provision. In regard to the succession of property, both men and women will be given the same rights and entitlements under the revised Code.

28. The Ministry of Justice, together with WAO, the women's movement and women's NGOs, have successfully brought about the necessary changes. To process in-house change, the Women's Affairs Department in the Ministry has been making efforts to mainstream gender into the long and short-term programmes of the Ministry. Incorporation of gender issues into the training curriculum of judges, prosecutors and police is one of the successful ventures in this regard.

29. To tackle the problem of trafficking in girls and women, WAO together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and other concerned ministries and partners, such as the International Organization for Migration and NGOs, are making a nationwide effort. A long, medium and short-term plan of action is being developed, whereby the involvement of all stakeholders is being ensured. A national plan of action has been developed through a national workshop involving all stakeholders. This measure will ensure the safety of women and protection of their human rights and will assist female migrant workers.

30. *Attitudinal changes*. Apart from changes in the legal provisions and instruments, importance has been placed by the governmental and non-governmental agencies on the need for increasing the awareness of women and the public about women's rights issues and the penalty for violating women's rights. Attempts to bring changes in the attitude of the law-enforcement agencies are among the significant initiatives. The following objectives have resulted from the activities over the reporting period:

- Improving and updating women's legal literacy
- Improving public awareness of the legal and human rights of women
- Increasing the awareness of law-enforcement agencies (e.g. police and judiciary) at the federal and regional levels about women's rights provided by the Constitution of the country and embodied in CEDAW
- Increasing familiarity with the newly adopted Family Code, particularly at the regional level.

D. Eliminating violence against women and girls

31. Violence against women, being one of the priority concerns, has received significant emphasis in efforts to ensure women's and girls' safety and security in the country. The connectedness of the issue with HIV/AIDS, women's health (physical and psychological) and legal and human rights has been made very clear both at the policy-making level as well as at the level of programme implementation. The Penal Code has been revised to ensure safeguards for women and to penalize perpetrators. The health system is taking care of the management of female victims of violence. The HIV/AIDS/gender programme (HIV/AIDS Secretariat/WAO) has initiated particular programmes to protect girls' and women's rights in this regard. The National Committee on Traditional Harmful Practices is active in combating violence against women, which is believed to be part of the tradition.

32. Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental development agencies and women's groups and international communities has demonstrated remarkable potential in this regard. Activities ranging from mass media campaigns

to social mobilization, such as observing 16 days of activism, white ribbon campaigns and radio and television programmes, managed to create such a commotion that they helped to raise awareness not only among women but also among men. With the continued pressure from non-governmental organizations (women's organizations and others) both at the grass-roots and national levels, law-making agencies have begun to appreciate the importance of playing an active role in handling cases of violence against women. Considering the intensity of the problem, current efforts indicate a positive trend towards ending violence against women and girls. Social mobilization against rape and abduction was one of the significant actions during the report period. A number of activities have been organized and launched collaboratively among governmental and non-governmental organizations and women's groups. Major activities undertaken for social mobilization included a demonstration to oppose violence against women (mobilized governmental and non-governmental organizations of the city administration, including the law-enforcement agencies) and a campaign against harmful traditional practices. These were carried out by the National Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations, including women's associations. The main intention was to assist in creating a better social and psychological environment for girls and women in which to operate and live and to ensure the development of their mental culture.

33. Social rehabilitation and protection measures have been initiated and are being carried out for women and children affected by violence against women and harmful traditional practices, and displaced by the border conflict and war. Apart from confidence-building initiatives and measures to reintegrate them into the community, vocational training, skill development programmes and activities to increase women's economic ability to overcome economic hardship (savings and credit schemes) were launched. Women were provided with leadership development training to support their effort to establish themselves in public spheres. It was a means particularly beneficial for women at the grass-roots level. The project personnel were sensitized and helped to formulate projects and programmes sensitive to and accommodative of the needs of the victims. They were provided with leadership development training as well.

34. Research and studies have been carried out to identify the sociocultural determinants of violence against women and harmful traditional practices and their effect on girls' and women's lives in the long term.

E. Eliminating discrimination in the health sector and service delivery system

35. Health, being a crucial area, received notable priority in the development programme of the Government. The issues and concerns of women's health and its significance have been placed in this context. To guarantee basic services and counselling for women and to combat the major vulnerability of women vis-à-vis health questions, the Ministry of Health, together with its partners in the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors and international and multilateral agencies, has taken some concrete measures. Prioritizing the issues is one of them. Women's reproductive health issues, HIV/AIDS and management of violence against victims are the three main areas that have been focused upon.

36. The Women's Affairs Department in the Ministry of Health has been focusing on the importance of having gender mainstreamed in the sector. Therefore, developing a guideline received priority. Besides, reproductive health-care services, particularly to reach rural women and adolescent girls, are at stake. To ensure outreach of the programme, the Women's Affairs Division has placed importance on research and study. In the context of addressing the psychological health of women and girls, it has connected violence against women and the management of victims of violence against women (particularly rape and domestic violence) to its prevention programmes and to HIV/AIDS concerns.

F. Eliminating discrimination in labour and social welfare

37. To ensure female workers' health in general and reproductive health in particular in the workplace, the identification of arduous or dangerous work for women and its effect on reproductive health were examined. In order to create a better working environment for female workers of all strata, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has identified the jobs and work that are dangerous for women's health in order to introduce measures to protect women from industrial and work-related health hazards and initiated measures to make the response effective to the needs of female workers in different areas. In this regard, the development of a directory of women's social services run by non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) is a step forward and may be used by employers as a ready reference.

38. In order to improve policy and the working environment, the development of supplementary guidelines to facilitate the implementation of labour laws and other conventions concerning women and youth are considered to be a major step. For ensuring effective implementation of labour laws and to establish and protect the equal rights of women in the labour market, supplementary guidelines will play an important role. They are designed in a way that protects the interests of women and young persons.

39. Proclamation No. 104/1998 on the creation of a private employment agency, a major sector for women's employment, will facilitate tackling problems of employment in the country. This proclamation is expected to be beneficial for women's economic advancement by promoting employment opportunities for women.

40. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has developed a directory of women's social services run by non-governmental development organizations to create easy access for women to information on available social services and benefits. This will help to facilitate easy identification of the service delivery system and its location and enable government agencies to provide necessary information to women and girls on the service delivery agencies and mechanisms.

G. Eliminating discrimination in agriculture

41. Like other sectors, agriculture has also made some progress with regard to policy instruments and technicalities to address women's needs in the sector. The development of a gender-sensitive five-year agricultural development programme is a landmark in this regard. The programme is believed to set a new trend for

sustaining development growth. It is expected to help to emphasize the women's agenda to make the sector much more productive, which in effect will contribute to the sustainable development process.

42. The attempt to conduct research on women in agricultural development helps in the investigation of the special needs of women that the sector has to address and can fulfil. It also keeps the policy planners informed about the contribution of women in the sector.

43. The sector has taken the initiative of generating and processing basic statistical data on women with regard to demographic, educational, employment, economic and health aspects, which is a milestone in overcoming the dearth of gender-disaggregated data. It helps to expose discriminatory treatment against women.

44. To effect necessary cultural and structural changes, the agri-training curriculum has been reviewed from a gender perspective. Focus has been placed upon the systemic neglect to which women are subjected in the absence of a gender analysis and upon the incorporation of gender concerns in the practical tools.

45. Knowledge and skill-building measures and measures for capacity and confidence-building have been initiated to strengthen the ability and confidence of female farmers. To increase their ability and understanding, female farmers were provided with training in leadership development, management, agricultural technologies and farm activities, including a demonstration about improved crops and varieties. Introducing appropriate technology to women was one of the significant initiatives in this regard.

46. Within the sectoral scope, attempts have been made to support women's economic independence. The particular effort in this regard is the launching of income-generating activities for women.

47. In order to create and gradually establish a women-friendly agricultural sector, initiatives were taken for the regional agricultural personnel on the traditional roles attributed to women and men and their negative consequences on women, and on gender and agri-development. The intention was to create a general awareness of gender aspects in the agricultural sector and attitudinal changes among the personnel and extension workers with a long-term effect on environment and culture. The development and introduction of gender-training materials both at the federal and regional levels and the promotion of women-friendly agricultural technologies was a step forward. The training of women development agents in agri-technologies was also a significant contribution.

H. HIV/AIDS

48. HIV/AIDS, being an issue affecting human development beyond the boundary of the health crisis, concerns development practitioners, planners and visionaries and the political leaders of the country. During the reporting period, the issue has been given priority owing to the rapid spread of the pandemic and to the need to minimize its devastation with regard to loss of life and its negative effect on the development process, including the production system, on national capacity of the sectors and on education. In order to tackle the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, the Government has set up a National Council (with the President of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as Chairman) and a National

Secretariat (federal and regional). The perspective of gender mainstreaming guides the programmes and activities of the national Secretariat. WAO is represented in the Council and the Secretariat, the higher decision-making body, to oversee and ensure the gender sensitivity of those bodies and the gender responsiveness of their programmes. Special gender-specific programmes have been undertaken to enhance women's capacity and negotiation ability in the context of HIV/AIDS and to enable women to maintain control over their own sexuality. Particular emphasis has been placed upon tackling the kind of violence related to HIV/AIDS. Special programmes have been devised for the prevention and control of the disease and to safeguard women and adolescent girls and the girl child.

49. Non-governmental development agencies, being an equal partner, are playing a complementary role to the efforts of the Government in the fight against HIV/AIDS. National and international NGDOs and multilateral agencies are equally concerned about combating the pandemic; specific attention is being given to the gender aspect of the epidemic as well.

50. Apart from structural measures, other practical actions are being put in place to combat the epidemic. Confidence-building and information-sharing activities, counselling and peer group education are some of the widely implemented activities in this regard. Social mobilization and advocacy activities are also being implemented to address the issue of the stigma attached to the pandemic, particularly to deal with women's and girls' special vulnerability, which is aggravated by women's role and participation in the society.

51. Considering the particular vulnerability of young persons, efforts have been redoubled to mobilize and organize young persons around the issue for their well-being and to combat the epidemic. Discussion forums and interfacing with social advocates are being organized to encourage young persons to participate in the fight against the epidemic and to establish a greater role and contribution to the society and social development for them.

I. Eliminating discrimination in water resources

52. A major policy shift has been taking place in the water sector of Ethiopia. The sector has made certain policy decisions enabling women to influence sectoral activities in their favour and ensuring theoretical acceptance of women's quality participation in the sector. The development of gender mainstreaming guidelines and checklists is one significant contribution towards eliminating gender discrimination in the sector. The issues and concerns of gender have been incorporated into the Ethiopian Water Resources Management Policy as well. The policy framework deals with the following major issues in the sector:

- Ensuring participation of women in the management of water resources; women's role has been made central
- Promotion of women's full involvement in planning, implementation, decision-making and training-related activities has been made a policy decision
- Women farmers' needs concerning small-scale irrigation development programmes, and their role in that field have been addressed under the irrigation subsector of the ministerial policy. In the light of the promotion of

decentralization and a user-based irrigation management system, the special needs of rural women are not considered separately.

- Gender issues are being considered in the ongoing Sector Development Strategy preparation process. Moreover, emphasis has been placed upon generating sex-disaggregated data and information in the newly designed database and programming activities.

All these aspects bring necessary qualitative changes at the decision-making level as well as in the resource allocation process.

J. Advocacy campaign and capacity-building to eliminate discrimination

53. During the reporting period, efforts have been concerted to improve and update women's legal literacy in order for women to exercise their own rights. Familiarizing women and increasing their knowledge and information about the issue in order to take necessary steps is an ongoing effort with a view to their advancement. In order to create or heighten its awareness of women's legal and human rights, information was made available to the public. Efforts were made to improve the consciousness and the sense of responsibility of law-enforcement agencies about women's rights under the Constitution and as embodied in CEDAW. This action is intended to give effect to the provisions of national instruments as well as the provisions of CEDAW and other international human rights instruments and treaties.

54. A public awareness campaign and advocacy in the form of a radio show and a drive on the part of religious leaders have been undertaken and made ongoing for eliminating harmful traditional practices against women. Focus has been placed on such areas as harmful traditional practices in girls' health, their physical implications and the prevailing legal sanctions in the country; and legal awareness and the formation of opinions at the school level. Organizing women around the issues of human and legal rights and the right to maintain bodily integrity was a significant activity over the reporting period. Another activity consisted of improving the awareness of women and the public at large about the provisions of the National Policy on Ethiopian Women and the provisions of the newly adopted Family Code with the objective of fully implementing them.

55. The creation of resource materials (translation of a gender training manual into Amharic, development of guidelines for alternative childcare programmes, manual for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, manual for creating awareness about disabilities, development of the National Programme of Action for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities) helped to reduce the dearth of resources and acted as an instrument for the women's rights advocates in the country. WAO efforts to establish a Women's Resource Centre is one of the significant actions with regard to developing institutional capacity.

K. Policy and strategic measures to eliminate discrimination

56. It is essential to have necessary and powerful instruments developed and available to bring desired changes in the status of socioculturally marginalized

women and men. To eliminate discrimination against women requires making policy and strategic directions available. Upon realization of that fact, the government women's machinery, together with women's associations, movements and national, international and multilateral development agencies, have been making an effort to develop new strategies and policies to influence national and regional development efforts. Moreover, attempts are being made to have financial and technical resources allocated to develop the necessary policy instruments. To this end, following are the instruments that have been instituted during the reporting period. The significant steps with regard to creating a better policy environment to pave the way towards women's equal participation, rights and achievements are the following:

- Micro- and Small-Enterprise Development Strategy
- Incorporation of gender in the National Agricultural Policy
- Development of gender guidelines for the agricultural sector
- Integration of gender in the agricultural research system
- National Action Programme for Mainstreaming of Gender in Combating Desertification: a strategic document to guide the gender mainstreaming activities of the Environmental Authority
- Development and introduction by the Ministry of Education of certain policy and strategic documents to address mainstreaming gender questions, including the promotion of girls' education
- Development by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Women's Affairs Office of a gender-sensitive checklist for the planners to design and implement development projects and programmes from a gender perspective
- Attempts are ongoing to have gender issues incorporated in the reform of the Federal Civil Service Commission and to have gender questions dealt with in the process. The amendment of maternity leave provisions is one of the significant changes in this regard

  Efforts have been made to have gender mainstreamed into the Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan-National Poverty Reduction strategic document. In order to ensure women's participation in the process of finalizing the document, it will be debated at the local level, where women will constitute 40 per cent of the participants
- Review of primary school textbooks from a gender perspective
- Development of a gender-sensitive regional education plan of action
- Development of a gender-sensitive checklist for the water sector
- The National Committee on Women's Advancement is engaged in developing a National Plan of Action for reducing the gap between women's and men's attainments and progress and thus the mainstreaming of a gender perspective.

57. The foregoing are some of the instruments that have come into existence and efforts that were made during the reporting period for eliminating discrimination against women and to have women's concerns and needs properly addressed in development projects and programmes.

L. Partnership of governmental and non-governmental organizations to eliminate discrimination

58. Ever since the current democratic Government took charge of the well-being of the Ethiopian people, special emphasis has been placed on the development of disadvantaged groups like women and children. The Government has committed itself to eliminate gradually all kinds of limitations on the way to achieving the advancement of the marginalized and backward sectors of the population. In implementing its commitments, the Government realized the need for the participation of different sectors in attaining the goal, which is one of the main features of democratic governance.

59. In the process of implementing the provisions of CEDAW, the Government has enhanced collaborative measures with NGDOs, particularly those dealing with women's rights issues, women's groups and women themselves as a strategy. The task was not easy, though, in an atmosphere where questions of trust and cooperation between parties are not resolved to the fullest extent. But the women's machinery, together with women's rights organizations, played an important role in bridging the gaps between the different parties. The previous success of such collaboration was used as an example to encourage others, which worked effectively during the reporting period.

60. One of the most important outcomes and historic gains for women in the reporting period is the revision of the Family Code of Ethiopia. In order to make it a reality, the women's human rights groups, NGDOs and the respective governmental organizations, including WAO, cooperated with each other in their best effort. The research findings of one group have been used to argue with the lawmakers by other groups. In negotiating with the policy makers, and lobbying them, the government machinery on women had input from NGDOs, while the agendas of those organizations were heard through the government organs.

61. The promotion of women's economic, social and political independence has experienced the joint collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The effective implementation of the Women's Development Initiative Project, a governmental initiative, largely depends on the quality participation of the non-governmental development agents at national as well as regional and grass-roots levels. It brings together women's associations, female school dropouts, NGDOs, community-based organizations and concerned sectoral ministries and bureaux of the governmental agencies.

IV. Actual achievement and progress made

62. As narrated in the previous sections, a major policy shift has taken place in the national development process and the governmental mechanisms to address women's needs. With regard to giving effect to the provisions of CEDAW, this shift has created an enabling environment for pursuing the women's agenda in order to establish their equality in every sphere of life. Evidently, that contributed to the process of bringing changes in the legislative provisions concerning women and their rights. From the educational sector to water management, from the legal environment to the economic sphere, certain progress has been achieved towards

full implementation of the provisions of the Convention. Specific sectoral achievements in this regard are stated below.

A. Education

63. With regard to human development concerns, the literacy rate among females has increased in Ethiopia. The number of adult women who can read and write and do numeric calculations has increased. In addition, the number of girls enrolled in primary schools and the percentage of girls attending higher education is on the rise. The Government, together with its partners, including international and multilateral agencies, has set up a target for reducing gender disparity in primary education.

64. Because of the review of the curriculum, qualitative and gender-sensitive changes are under way. Textbooks portray the positive image of girls and women and their contribution to societal development.

65. The existence of gender-sensitive policy instruments is having an impact upon both institutional and programmatic measures. Gender-sensitive resource allocations and affirmative actions for increasing girls' enrolment and completion of tertiary education are some of the significant achievements in this regard. The achievements of girls and the number of female students in higher educational institutions have increased. Instituting a quota system in higher education promotes girls' education.

66. Through its regular newsletters, the Ministry of Education has reached a greater audience and spread the positive outcome of the affirmative actions with regard to girls' education and women's literacy programmes.

B. Violence against women, harmful traditional practices and women's health concerns

67. Violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional practices, received increased attention during the reporting period. From policy lobbying to institutional consciousness-raising, from media campaigns to social mobilization, activities of different kinds have had an impact on the law-enforcement agencies. Greater public awareness has also moved men in the community to advocate for the elimination of all types of violence against women and for women's and girls' rights in the community. The major achievements with regard to tackling violence against women and harmful traditional practices are the following:

- Increased knowledge and awareness among women and harmful traditional practice practitioners and the community on the negative effects of harmful traditional practices on women's health (physical and psychological)
- The relationship between harmful traditional practices and HIV/AIDS has begun to receive the recognition of community and policy planners and programme designers
- Changes have been made in the nature of the mass media campaign
- Increased public awareness and media campaigns against violence against women and harmful traditional practices
- Changes in the provisions of penal codes and other related legal provisions

- Social opinion has been mobilized to punish those who violate women's rights, including their sexual rights
- Women's increased confidence in discussing the violations of their rights, including the sexual violence against them
- Women's increased awareness of their constitutional rights to protect themselves and to ensure their bodily integrity
- In some regions, bringing perpetrators to justice has helped to reduce violence against women and harmful traditional practices
- Documentary films have been produced based on research findings, which have been found to be useful to disseminate information on the harmful aspects of traditional practices. The documentaries have become powerful instruments to create awareness of harmful traditional practices and violence against women
- Reducing maternal mortality is one of the millennium goals of the Government of Ethiopia.

C. Economic ability and independence of women

68. Over the reporting period, several significant achievements have been noticed in the area of women's economic ability and independence. The initiatives of governmental agencies together with the efforts of non-governmental agencies (national and international) has contributed to reducing the economic discrimination that women are subjected to. The specific progress made in this regard is the following:

- Women's increased capacities, skills, experience and knowledge
- Attitudinal shift in the society, in general, and in men, in particular, towards women's ability and potential in the economic sphere
- Vocational skills to facilitate women's increased engagement in economic and income-generating activities
- Women's increased engagement and participation in income-generating activities
- Greater access and linkages to markets for women
- Increased availability of economic resources
- Attitudinal changes within the community concerning women's capabilities and the question of female equality.

D. Social and economic rehabilitation of women and children

69. Women and children, particularly those affected by drought, consecutive famine and war, were brought under rehabilitation programmes and projects by the governmental and non-governmental organizations and provided with resettlement and other economic benefits. These included assistance ranging from food aid to skills development training and ideas to establish income-earning activities. Many

street women and children were brought under such activities. Family members of war veterans received special attention in the areas of health and education. Though the balance between supply and demand is quite fragile, the activities of the governmental and non-governmental development agencies have brought certain exemplary changes in the social context in Ethiopia.

E. Labour and social welfare

70. Initiatives in the area of labour and social welfare have created a lasting impact, particularly with regard to policy matters and new provisions for women's services. The Labour Proclamation (No. 42/1993) has been used by many organizations to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for women. Information on social services for women is made available for different users, including donors, planners, researchers, social scientists and women's associations and groups. Basic statistical data on women are available. Many Ethiopian women are being assisted to obtain information on employment abroad and are being assisted by the legal agencies to avail themselves of opportunities for getting overseas employment.

71. The creation of resource material in the area has been a boon, particularly to development workers working with women and girls in the informal sector.

F. Women in the federal civil service

72. Affirmative action taken by the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) has resulted in the promotion of women in leadership and decision-making positions. Moreover, a number of women in the civil service in all personnel committees has increased. Affirmative action is implemented in the civil service to benefit women in recruitment as well as to encourage women to participate in the Commission. Change in the regulation of the Commission has created new benefits for female workers that ensure their well-being, particularly their psychological health.

G. Agriculture

73. Women in the agricultural sector have been benefiting from the measures that were initiated and adopted over the reporting period. There are greater opportunities for women to sharpen their technical ability, strengthen their knowledge base and learn more technical aspects of agriculture. A large number of female farmers have been brought under various income-generating activities. Many of them are engaged in partnerships for crop-production activities. Female farmers are receiving appropriate technology. Over the reporting period, close to 250 appropriate technology devices were disseminated to women farmers. More than 1,000 women farmers received training in various agricultural technologies. In addition, women development agents and supervisors are being trained in various agricultural technologies with the objective of catering for female farmers and their needs. This obviously has been contributing to the process of creating a sector friendly for female farmers and making the sector more accommodative of women's needs.

H. Legal equality

74. The Family Code has been reviewed and women's equality questions are an integral part of the new code. The new Family Code ensures women's equal rights with regard to marriage (consent, age, registration), effects of violations of essential conditions of marriage, effects of marriage, dissolution of marriage, liquidation of pecuniary relations between spouses, irregular union (living together unmarried), settlement of disputes arising out of marriage and irregular union, adoption, obligation to supply maintenance, minors and authority of parents. This achievement empowers women to exercise their equal rights with men and enables them to claim equal participation in making decisions and maintaining their personhood.

75. Another step forward with regard to legal provisions is to bring the Penal Code under review in order to ensure equal provisions for women.

76. Attempts to create legal awareness among women and in society at large and awareness of the gender dimension of legal provisions for law-enforcement agencies have brought a certain change in attitude about responding to and tackling any violation of women's rights be it physical, sexual or any other type. The particular change that was noticed over the last couple of years is women's proactive response to report the incidents to the authorities and institutions dealing with women's legal rights. In a traditional country like Ethiopia, for women and their families to come out of their shell, defying social taboos and making efforts to establish their rights, is a big challenge and change on their part.

77. Today, many women and their communities are aware of the existence of their specific rights and legal institutions as a result of the initiatives carried out over the reporting period.

78. The foregoing changes have begun to affect the attitude of the people concerning women's rights. A certain amount of respect for women's rights is noticed in the attitude of men in different social strata. Also the law-enforcement agencies are taking greater interest in women's cases and complaints.

I. HIV/AIDS

79. Campaign and advocacy actions increased the awareness of women and the community about HIV/AIDS, how it is spread and the nature of its effects. Though the issue itself is stigmatized, which jeopardizes women's social status doubly, with the effort of development practitioners and specialized organizations and agencies, a rise in women's confidence has been observed over the period. Though on a limited scale, women have started gaining the ability to take a position in favour of their right to lead a healthy life and against HIV/AIDS. To a limited extent, their ability to defy a situation and say "no" has been observed, which in the Ethiopian context is a remarkable change.

80. A sociocultural environmental change has been noticed, particularly in discussing and sharing HIV/AIDS knowledge and information comfortably in the community and at the group level, which is a great breakthrough in a traditional society like Ethiopia.

J. Skill development

81. Initiatives to enhance women's professional and community skills have proven to be effective in achieving change in women's lives and eliminating discrimination against them. They have helped to increase women's productivity, confidence, negotiation ability, leadership ability and their ability to influence the decision-making process. The initiatives have had an impact on the abilities of women from both the rural and urban areas.

K. Social mobilization, lobbying and advocacy

82. Advocacy and the social mobilization process have always been beneficial for the advancement of women. The advocacy and social mobilization initiatives undertaken during the reporting period have had the following results:

- Women have become aware of the benefits of organizing under one umbrella to fight poverty and related social problems
- The number of women leaders, advocates, educators, researchers and extension agents who influence policies and laws so as to eliminate discrimination against women has increased
- Women's participation in the political, economic and social sectors has increased
- A gender networking group has been organized
- Men have started to take an interest in eliminating discrimination against women, particularly with regard to bringing an end to violence against women and harmful traditional practices
- The number of women in leadership positions has increased
- Awareness on the part of women and the community of women's rights, particularly the newly adopted Family Code, has been increased.

V. Structural changes (social and organizational)

83. Change in the legal structure is one of the significant achievements with regard to eliminating discrimination against women in Ethiopia. Policy shifts and shifts in strategic objectives influence the structural set-up of the institutions and agencies, which play an important role in the process of eliminating discrimination against women.

A. Focus on CEDAW articles

84. Activities and initiatives of the Government as well as its development partners over the reporting period have managed to give effect to the provisions of CEDAW to a remarkable extent. Though the focus on different articles of the Convention varies for many different reasons, in many ways all articles are touched upon. The provisions regarding women's legal rights and the abolition of all forms of discrimination in that regard were the focus of a tremendous effort; attention was

also paid to the issues of women's economic independence. Institutional changes received equal importance with the programmatic aspects, which reflects a balanced relationship between the policy planners and the programme designers, implementers, development advocates and activists. The areas most affected over the reporting period were poverty, education and training, violence against women, economic empowerment, participation in the power and decision-making process, issues of human rights, the girl child and HIV/AIDS. To a certain extent, the following areas were influenced by the initiatives: health; women and children affected by war; media campaign for establishing women's equal rights and to bring an end to violence against women; and women and the environment. The following are the CEDAW articles most focused upon: 1-4; 5 (a); 6-8; 10; 11 (1 (a) and (f), 2 (b)); 12-16.

B. Specific benefits for women

85. Changes in the federal laws with regard to the Family Code created greater rights for women, which ensure their equality with men concerning, inter alia, marriage, divorce, custody and guardianship of children and rights to matrimonial properties. It has been a landmark victory for women in Ethiopia.

86. Gradual changes in institutional attitudes indicate better guarantees for women to have the protection of law-enforcement agencies, which is a major stepping stone for establishing women's rights.

87. The policy and programme initiatives that were undertaken by the Government and its development partners brought significant changes in the social, political and economic life of Ethiopian women. Such initiatives, ranging from policy shifts to awareness-raising activities at the institutional and community levels, brought important changes which are beneficial for the advancement of women, as they give effect to the provisions of CEDAW in a significant manner. In addition to a more progressive policy environment, women have gained some benefits at the level of their personal development. Following are the specific benefits that the changed environment and policy measures have brought to women's lives:

- Attitudinal change towards women in the legislative bodies is encouraging for them to take advantage of the services of those bodies
- Women, to a certain extent, managed to get rid of legal discrimination. As far as the legal instruments are concerned, they are more egalitarian with the changes in laws and the legal system
- The process of treating women on equal terms with men has begun to be a reality
- Women's issues have gained greater acceptance in all spheres, with some reservations
- The rights of female migrant workers are protected (in relative terms) and taken care of, which is encouraging for more women to take such opportunities
- The number of programmes and projects on women's needs and concerns is on the increase. Particularly among the non-governmental agencies, an increased trend has been noticed these days, which offers increased benefits to women

- Available sex-disaggregated data indicate the existing discrimination between women and men which encourage development analysts and planners to advise about and initiate programmes and actions that are sensitive and responsive to address and overcome the discrimination
- The newly formulated labour proclamation guarantees female workers' rights
- Female workers enjoy 90 working days' maternity benefit, which helps them emotionally and psychologically and enables them more effectively to organize and manage their post-delivery needs and childcare arrangements
- The regulatory changes in the Federal Civil Service Commission increases chances for more women to be in gainful employment
- An increased number of women are influencing policy decisions of the Federal Civil Service Commission
- An increased number of women occupy leadership and decision-making positions
- The number of women participating in matters concerning women has increased and the quality of their participation has improved
- Female professionals have enhanced ability and skills in their respective fields
- Women have greater economic opportunity and access to critical economic resources, including microcredit, training and skills
- The legal and institutional environment is encouraging for women to form their own associations and organize around their own issues, restoring their confidence and trust in institutional commitments
- Women have increased access to information regarding their rights, legal institutions and the role of law-enforcement agencies
- Women have increased opportunities to receive training and to access other skill development measures
- The policy environment is being influenced by gender concerns, which makes it more encouraging
- Planning, budget and other resource allocation processes are more accommodative and gender issues are being considered in planning and budget proposals
- Awareness on the part of male colleagues helps to maintain a psychologically safe environment for female staff
- The traditionally defined women's workload and cultural barriers are discussed in different forums, which helps to increase institutional sensitivity and therefore gives women a better environment in which to argue on their behalf
- Women have enhanced leadership ability and status
- The decision-making abilities of women are acknowledged and promoted
- Awareness of the gender division of labour and responsibility has increased
- Study and research on women's lives and issues increases women's confidence to negotiate and provide arguments with greater legitimacy

- The productivity of female farmers has increased
- Female farmers have enhanced knowledge of new crops and varieties of crops and production technology
- Technological advances have reduced women's hardship
- The economic ability of female farmers has increased
- Women have increased ability in diet diversification and knowledge of improved nutrition
- The exposure of rural women to improved technologies has increased their knowledge and productivity
- Rural female farmers have a greater ability to avoid production losses to a greater extent
- Improved knowledge of women development agents and supervisors has helped to create a better understanding and ability to address women's issues effectively, which in turn has created a better working relationship between the farmers and the agents
- Skill development training and orientation has enhanced women's confidence in the work environment
- Women and girls are becoming role models in different sectors, including education and agriculture
- Girls have increased access to education opportunities (primary, secondary, tertiary)
- Women and girls have increased ability to exercise their rights
- Non-formal and continuing education benefit more girls and women.

VI. Forthcoming events and initiatives

88. To ensure the continuity of the progress towards giving full effect to CEDAW, the women's machinery is looking forward to implementing the following initiatives:

- Continue ongoing efforts in the civil service and economic reform to ensure greater participation of women both in terms of number and quality
- Continue implementation of the Ethiopian Women's Development Fund and the Women's Development Initiative Project to help women to overcome their economic poverty and contribute to their political, social and legal advancement
- To address socioculturally defined and protected constraints, a survey on women's literacy will be conducted soon
- In order to provide women with alternative economic activity (such as credit schemes), the economic rehabilitation of harmful traditional practices practitioners is envisaged to help them to maintain their living and to create a greater support base in the community against harmful traditional practices

- Income-generating projects for disadvantaged women
- Efforts to enhance women's (professional and grass-roots) leadership ability
- Special measures are being taken to give effect to existing policy instruments and laws
- Emphasis will be placed to ensure gender-sensitive budgeting and planning both at the federal and regional levels. In this regard, capacity development of responsible professionals will receive particular attention
- Capacity enhancement in project planning and implementation and budget preparation for women coordinators from the federal level up to the kebele level
- A social awareness and mobilization programme has been developed to deal with pre-marriage testing, treatment of infected persons in the family as well as in the community
- Advocacy and mobilization at both the federal and regional levels to combat HIV/AIDS and women's particular vulnerability to it
- Mobilize youth and adolescent girls and boys for creating awareness about violence against women and harmful traditional practices and organize a local-level campaign against those problems. Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations will be a strategy to ensure success of the programme
- Through the five-year Programme of Action, WAO, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund and Regional Women's Affairs Bureaux, is attempting to bring a significant change in the status of women against violence against women and harmful traditional practices
- To create and establish a more enabling policy environment, the development and implementation of specific policy and strategic instruments have been targeted, including a campaign and advocacy strategy to combat violence against women and harmful traditional practices and a strategy to have the media act in favour of women's interests
- Best practices of previous years will be replicated to strengthen women's groups and movements, particularly at the grass-roots level. Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental development organizations will play a vital role in this regard
- For sustaining existing achievements, the continuity of ongoing programmes and projects is a strategic decision, in particular, to ensure that those strategic initiatives, including the Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan, remain gender responsive and serve in favour of women's interests.

VII. Conclusion

89. While the Government of Ethiopia and its machinery on women have made some remarkable advances in the position and status of women, there is yet a long way to go to achieve the objective of complete elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls in the country. This makes WAO constantly

vigilant of the challenges it and the national machinery on women are faced with. One of the major challenges is to implement the current policies and laws. In a society as traditional as Ethiopia, many vital issues of women's concerns, such as violence against women, reproductive health, sexuality and sexual rights and HIV/AIDS, are considered to be taboo. The joint struggle of the governmental and non-governmental agencies, civil society, private sector and women's groups and movements made a breakthrough to bring the issues into the forefront, to break the silence and to make them a national priority. Nonetheless, an enormous, systemic effort would be required to achieve the ultimate goal of women's advancement. Specifically, the following are the major concerns and challenges that need to be tackled in order to ensure the elimination of discrimination against women and establish their equality with men:

- Absence of sufficient human resources, advocates and economic resources to initiate multi-prong programmes, and absence of appropriate technologies to enable women to tackle the economic crisis
- Implementation of the laws to tackle the prevalence of violence against women, particularly rape and abduction and other forms of harmful traditional practices. Deep-rooted cultural beliefs and the prevalence of harmful traditional practices
- Absence of gender-disaggregated data. Lack of research and study focusing on gender discrimination, its extent and consequences for women's ability, skill, confidence and productivity
- Absence of adequate awareness and capacity of the institutions to effect mainstreaming of a gender concept in projects, programme cycles and in the organizational framework
- Absence of adequate participation of women in political practice, including institutional decision-making bodies at all levels
- Absence of a strong women's movement at the national, regional, zonal and local levels
- Absence of an effective monitoring mechanism and set indicators to measure progress in the main sectors.

90. Nevertheless, the Government of Ethiopia and its national machinery on women are committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and establish their equality with men. To accomplish such a huge task, a conscious and systemic effort will be made persistently in every sphere. It is hoped that such an effort will be carried out with the cooperation of all concerned, including NGDOs, the private sector, civil society, the international community, multilateral agencies and women themselves.